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**CRAFTS AND DESIGN ISSUE**

TAWA

VOL. II, SUMMER 1945

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# Canadian ART

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VOL. II

SUMMER 1945

No. 5

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ON COVER: Old boutonné bedspread made at Les Eboulements, Quebec.  
*Collection of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Montreal.*

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# CANADIAN HANDICRAFTS

BY ELIZABETH WYN WOOD\*

SOMETIMES we in Canada are told by visitors from the United States and from England that the role of Canadians is to interpret America to Britain and Britain to America. This always bewilders us a little because we are well aware that the British and the Americans know each other's addresses and understand each other very well. Indeed, sometimes we are inclined to think that you know each other better than either of you knows us. And so I have come to tell you of the arts and crafts of Canada . . .

But before I come to any description of our crafts I want to tell you some-

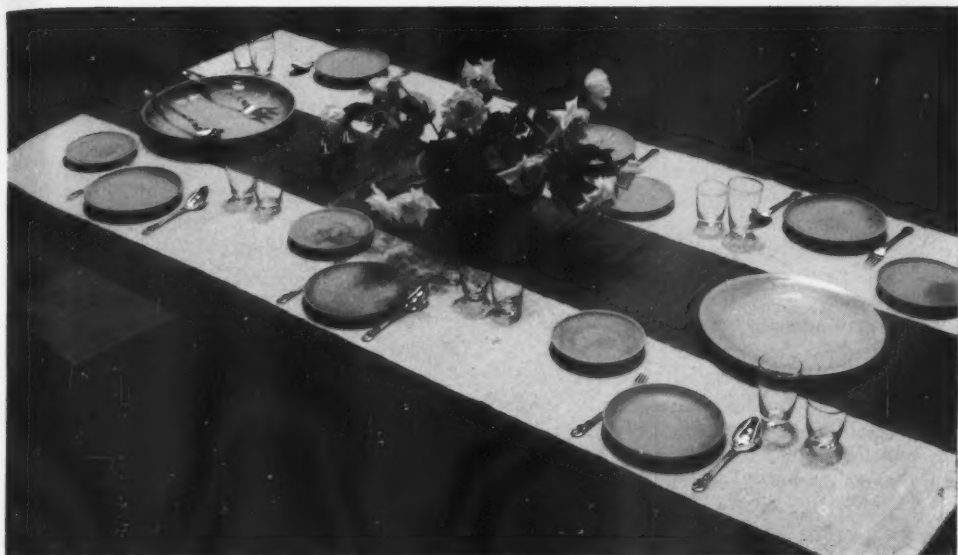
thing of the background which colours our thoughts, the background which makes Canadians *Canadian*.

The first thing which is peculiar to us is that we have a very large country occupied by a very small population . . . This means that we still have some of the problems of distribution of goods which have been unknown in your country since pioneer days. In compensation we have retained many of the hand skills. In this way people, remote from lucrative employment and from shops, are able to have simple, but fine furnishings which are made by them-

*\*A partial text of an address delivered before the National Arts Club, New York, on March 21, 1945.*



Photos: Roseborough and Rice



*Above: Ontario handmade pottery. Canadian glass. Silverware by C. P. Petersen of Montreal.*  
*Opposite: Table design with Canadian homespun and handicrafts.*

*Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Ontario.*

selves. . . . The second unique thing in the background of our arts is that we are a people of peoples. You, in the United States are also a people of peoples—but in a different way. We hear much of the “melting pot which is America.” In Canada we have never “melted” because we have worked by other principles . . . we have a culture of old French origin which embraces nearly a third of our people and we also have a culture of British origin which belongs to nearly half our people. And other large minority groups have brought their crafts to our land—Ukrainian, Finnish, Polish, German, Czech. We have, too, the native Eskimo and Indian. I cannot say their crafts have remained unchanged. They have been adapted to modern Canadian ways of living, each having its own identity but unified by the pattern of the whole. The French-speaking Canadians have coined a dynamic slogan to express it: “Unity in diversity”, they call it.

### *The Crafts*

While you may find any art or craft in any part of Canada, certain districts, because of raw materials there available,

because of the needs of the people or just because of local talents, have developed certain art industries or handicrafts to a high degree. For instance the Maritime Provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) are famous for their tweeds, linens and rugs.

Quebec is known for many crafts, especially for textiles and woodcarving. In many respects the devotion of Quebec to the arts and crafts, throughout its whole history, has been an inspiration to all Canada. There, in the earliest days of the colony, apprenticeship in a craft was compulsory. The Intendent Talon and Mgr. de Laval, first bishop of Quebec, seeing that pioneer life was barren of culture, engaged some of the best artisans in France to come out to work and to teach. Many of them remained. The school of Cap-Tourmente was established in 1675 and was perhaps the first school of arts of its kind anywhere in the world. And craft guilds survived on the St. Lawrence many years after their parent bodies in France had been abolished at the time of the Revolution. For three hundred years the artisans of Quebec have fashioned ecclesiastical and

domestic silverware and sculptures in wood which have found homes not only in our own churches and museums but sometimes in yours as well. Most rural French-Canadian homes still have hand-loom on which are woven textiles of hand-spun and hand-dyed woollens. Perhaps there has been some deterioration in the traditional crafts of Quebec, but those who direct the affairs of the province are well aware that the day of the homecraft is fading and now modern art industries and fine arts of all kinds are being government sponsored. Modern technical schools of furniture, of architecture and of the fine arts, and conservatories of music, are still stimulating contemporary French-Canadian culture. The new plastics department at the Technical School in Montreal, combining science with art, is said to be the most up-to-date on the continent.

In Ontario, whose people mostly come of British stock, the major crafts have never been so much those of the home as those of the studio. Ontario is now the centre of the ceramic and metal handicrafts.

The middle-western and western provinces have large minority groups which are of Eastern-European ancestry, Polish, Ukrainian, Czech, Finnish, as well as some famous religious sects, Doukhobors, Hussites and Mormons. The main gift of these New Canadians (as we call them) has been superb needlework. The stylized embroidery which in Europe embellished their holiday costumes, is now to be found on table linens which grace the most sophisticated homes in our country. In our middle-west where we once grew only grain, we have discovered that we can also grow flax—as we do also in New Brunswick and in Ontario. So linen is the gift of Canada to those who have brought the skills of the needle to Canada.

From the far west, as well as from Labrador in the north-east and in other isolated settlements, we have the age-old, yet strangely modern, crafts of the Indian. The Western Indians make carv-

ings of wood and argillite (a smooth black stone of exquisite surface) and fine woven and braided baskets. Other Indians and Eskimos make soft leather and fur sportswear, beadwork, and utensils of many kinds.

I shall tell you, now, something of the nature of a few of these crafts:

### *Rugmaking*

The first settlers in the east of Canada from North England, Scotland and France knew the ancient art of rug hooking. For generations they continued to use their traditional designs. The designs gradually deteriorated until there came a period we would rather forget: of the commercial "stamped pattern" and of the "picture rug". It was the fashion to cover the floor with a design which might be anything from a realistic landscape to a picture of a fireplace complete with cat and motto, "Home, Sweet Home". Then someone of influence had the bright idea that if rug-hookers *must* make pictures they should at least make *good* pictures so we had a short and sad period in which we were startled to find ourselves walking about on our more famous paintings, reproduced as rugs.

But the basic skill of fine hooking was never lost, nor the ambition to make large and important rugs. So leaders of wisdom took a hand in the situation. Universities, such as Mount Allison at Sackville and St. François Xavier at Antigonish, gave extension courses in design, and provincial departments of agriculture and of education embarked on youth training projects, and saw to it that materials and tools were in abundance. The Canadian Handicrafts Guild, organized all over Canada, was a stimulating factor in marketing these and other handicraft products. The finest of the old designs were revived and the best efforts of modern designers were enlisted. Today we have a hooked-rug industry of which we are very proud and for which we are very thankful in these days barren of trade with the orient. The rugs are made in the homes, the

larger ones, often more than sixty by forty feet, being made by the co-operative effort of several craftsmen. Not intended primarily as a commercial venture, this home industry, like that of weaving, has grown to such proportions that the rugs are marketed in handicraft shops and departmental stores all over Canada. Our large stores have great collections of them though they carry, today, no imported rugs. The best hooked rugs are the Cheticamp rugs and those from Cape Breton.

We have also, though, a smaller home industry of hand-knotted rugs of virgin wool—deep-piled, like those of Morocco but finer in texture. These rugs are

usually all of plain colour and texture, like the broadloom, but sometimes have a pattern made by different textures. "Half-flossa," we call those of two textures.

#### *Metal Work*

As you know, we are a great mining country. We produce gold, silver, nickel, copper, aluminum and a great many other metals. Today all metals that can be used for war are diverted to the war industries. Our major fine metal is gold—but your Government buys it nearly all from us. I have never seen a gold Canadian coin in my life and once, when I needed some gold for inlay in a piece

*Lamp by Cruden;  
wooden bowl by  
Mary Wright; table  
by Gibbard; ceramic  
bowl by Kathleen  
McKim*



*Photo: Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Ontario*

*Ceramic  
flower bowl  
by R. McCarthy;  
silverware by  
C. P. Petersen*



of black marble sculpture, I had to beg someone's old, gold teeth from my dentist! However, you, and the Generals, have left us our silver. And it is silver that most of our metal-craftsmen use. We have some good craftsmen in Canada. Perhaps we have not yet promoted their reputations abroad as Denmark and England have promoted the names of Jensen, Anderson, Alan Durst, etc. But, we, whose dinner tables gleam with modern flatware by Harold Stacey and Andrew Fussell of Toronto and by Petersen of Montreal (who once worked with Jensen in Denmark but who is a good Canadian nonetheless), are prepared to match their design and their skill against any silversmith in the world today. And those of us who can afford personal jewellery hold our heads high if our necks are encircled by the skill of Nancy Meek.

We have, too, a wrought-iron art, temporarily discontinued because of the

war. Kenneth Noxon, trained originally as an architect, became an iron-worker. Then he sat himself down and made upward of five thousand designs, ranging all the way from staircases to fire-tongs. He gathered to his forges eight or nine entire families of craftsmen, who work under his supervision. For the duration he is farming—and all his families are farming with him—but his shops on Yonge Street, in Toronto, still carry the name, "The Iron Workers", and on V-Day the sound of his hammers will be with us again.

Arthur Lee and Wenger, too, are known among us as artist iron-workers and founders. And L'Ecole du Meuble, in Montreal, is turning out very modern ecclesiastical and domestic metal work.

#### *Ceramics*

We have vast belts of all kinds of ceramic clay in Canada. We haven't ceramic art industries of the kind you



have in California and elsewhere. But we have the two extremes in ceramics; we have large commercial factories, situated mostly around Hamilton and Dundas and employing some eight to nine thousand persons, where dishes and bric-a-brac are made from English clays in stock patterns, and we have, on the other hand, a few, perhaps less than a hundred, ceramists to whom pottery is a very high art—experimenting always with glazes and pastes, trying ancient formulae and producing rare new ones, calling to their aid whatever help modern chemistry and techniques can give them.

The potteries of Kjeld and Erica Deichmann at Moss Glen, in New Brunswick, are rapidly becoming a tourist centre for those connoisseurs who like to buy their handicrafts "hot out of oven" as it were. Kjeld throws the pots on the wheel; Erica puts on the handles and decoration, and models quaint ani-

mals. They have developed some fine glazes which they refer to fondly as their "children", giving them nostalgic names: "Autumn River Blue," "Glen Green," and "Mountain Snow." They give their designs names, too, such as "Sophisticated Sophia" and "Madonna Turquoise."

The Canadian Guild of Potters has members in all parts of Canada, but Toronto, Ontario, is the centre of influence. Here one school, the Central Technical School, has given an impetus to the craft far beyond that which might be expected of any school. Zema Haworth, teaching ceramics, and Peter Haworth, directing the department, have consistently maintained the principle that pottery is not only a craft but a major art. Always having hundreds of students this school has graduated thousands of Canadians in the past twenty years, who know good pottery when they see it,



*Silverware by  
C. P. Petersen;  
table cloth of  
woven fibre and  
cotton, dyed ice  
blue, by Madame  
Rioux*



*Cider jug by Bailey Leslie; mugs by  
Florence Griffin*



*Above and below: Pitcher by Gladys  
Montgomery; coffee set by Kjeld and  
Erica Deichman; coffee pot by Kathleen  
Towers*



*Photos: Canadian Guild of Potters*

and many who can make it. From the kilns of this school come the enormous turned bowls and plates, often measuring 26" in diameter, for which Toronto craftsmen have become known; from its kilns come the ceramic sculptures of Eugenia Berlin, Florence Wyle and the satirist, Dora Wechsler, whose sculptures have been on exhibition these last three years in your Ferargil Galleries; and it was here that Rahn-Elliott developed many rare glazes, including a fine, bubbly, blue glaze and a beautiful yellow-green glaze—strange and hypnotic, like our northern lights. Jacques Spinard is a Montreal ceramist who works with precision and skill.

#### *Textiles and Clothes*

Homespun, as I have said, is the chief product of the homes of Quebec. There it is made from native wool, hand-spun and hand-dyed. Some craftsmen, however, such as Karen Bulow, have established shops and have gathered several weavers together to produce in quantity. The blending of plain weaving with the embroidery or tapestry work of the nuns has produced the interesting developments of the *boutonné* or raised button-like knots of wool on a foundation of wool, linen or catalogue, now characteristic of the Ile-aux-Coudres and the Murray Bay districts. Some of the Quebec wool is somewhat harsh to the touch and is suitable only for house furnishing but the quality of the weaving, its evenness and design make it much sought by decorators. Our best wool sheep are raised in New Brunswick. Here both the dyeing and fulling processes in making homespun are carefully supervised and a meticulous milling process shrinks the material from 38" to 30" in width and makes the tweed firm, yet very soft to the touch. Helen Mowat, a Canadian who trained as an artist in New York, has organized the Charlotte County Cottage Crafts, an organization which turns out tweeds and rugs in quantity. Madame Blanchard of Caraquet is known all over Canada for her exquisite

*Continued on page 207*



*Silver tea and coffee set, silver knives and spoons by Harold Stacey, Toronto*

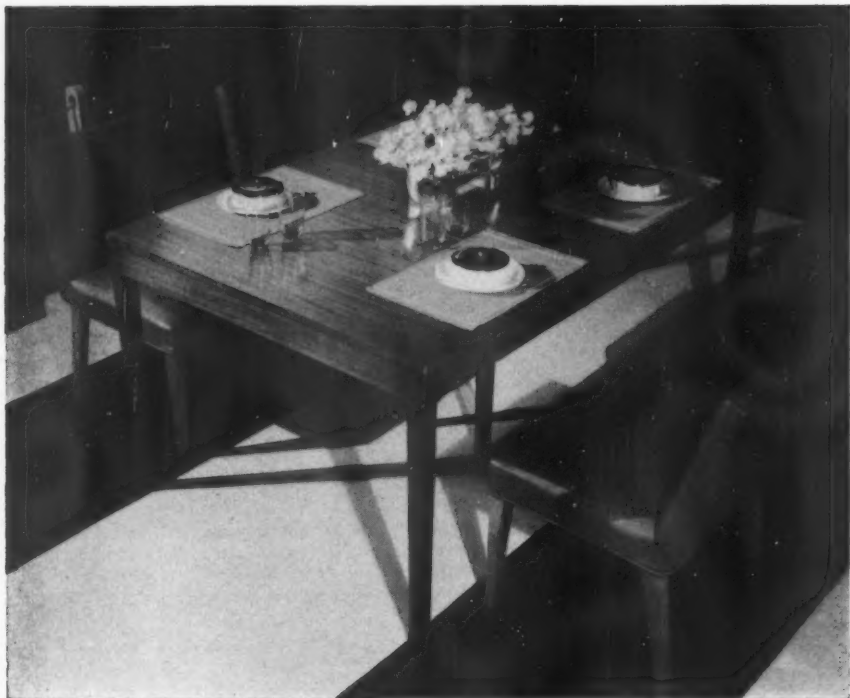
## SILVERWARE AND TEXTILES

*Sections from Canadian hooked rugs showing types of patterns used*



*Canadian hand-woven tweeds*

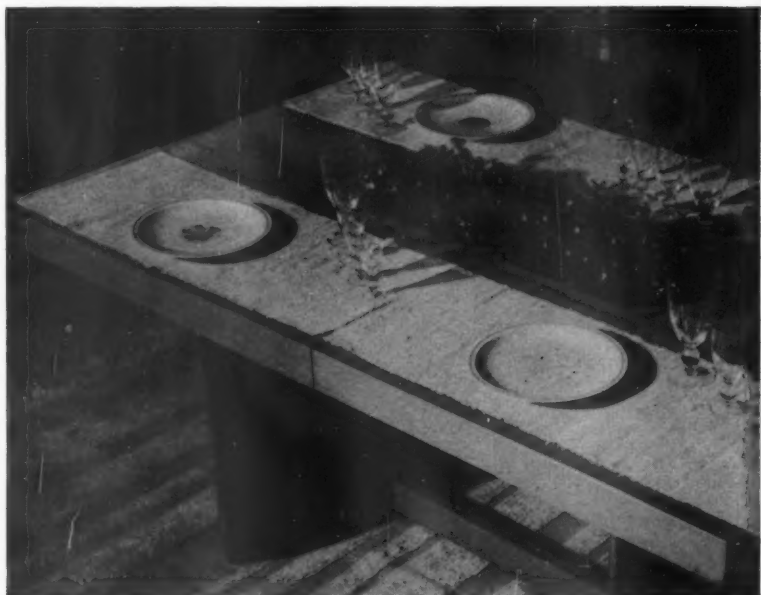
*Photos: Canadian Handicrafts Guild*



*From the  
exhibition  
Design in  
Industry  
at the  
Royal  
Ontario  
Museum*

*Chairs, covered with Canadian leather, and table by Gibbards, Toronto*

*Mahogany table and chairs by Ridpath's, Ltd., Toronto*



*Photos: Roseborough & Rice, Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Ontario*

# DESIGN IN INDUSTRY – A MISNOMER

BY DONALD W. BUCHANAN

IN Canada, the promotion of art in industry has a long way yet to go. Nevertheless, the cause of good design in furniture, textiles, pottery, glassware, carpets, metalware has many well wishers. First, there was the recent foundation of a school of industrial design in Toronto. Then, in May and June there was held at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto a well advertised exhibition on this theme.

This show, which provided contrasts between Canadian work and that of such other countries as Sweden, Great Britain and the United States, did prove a few points about Canadian production. In pottery making, even in woodwork, we are still pretty much in the adolescent stage. Glass making, while active, needs more criticism applied to its products on the grounds of function and simplicity. As for our old established industry of furniture making, even in its modern efforts, it is weak in design. While some of the tables and desks shown were simple and straightforward in construction, many were heavy handed and lacking in both lightness and grace. Do our cabinet makers really believe that stolidity is a virtue? The photograph reproduced at the bottom of page 194 shows an example of this prevailing tendency.

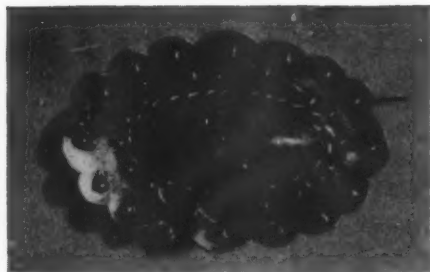
Best textiles of Canadian production in the show were those from the workshop of Karen Bulow in Montreal, and her carpets were neat and pleasant, too. But otherwise the textile designs from other countries stole the spotlight.

The title of this exhibition was perhaps misleading. It was called a display of industrial design. Yet it was really limited

to domestic articles and furnishings. The broader questions of art in industry were neglected. What, for instance, of the use of such products as aluminum sheets and magnesium rods, plywood and laminated wood, chemical plastics and cellulose compounds? Little or nothing was shown of these materials. The making of textiles out of threads spun from glass was about the only item of this nature to appear. From airplane construction in Canada, there could have been shown magnesium rods, light as paper and strong as steel, then also the moulded sculptures of plywood and the beauties of plastic and aluminum fittings.

Canadian manufacturers have developed new techniques of design for use in war that can be applied in peace as well. Is it not just this sort of thing which should be the keynote of any truly contemporary exhibition of industrial art? Surely some hope for beauty in daily life can come from the application of these new materials to household uses! Promotion of this type would seem to have more potential value than the encouragement of very minor crafts, such as wood carving by amateur craftsmen. Yet in this exhibition a grotesque root of an Alberta tree, carved into a shape vaguely female in contour, was proudly displayed in a glass case as a sample of modern Canadian design!

One last word in conclusion. Those who want to study the potentialities of industrial art in Canada should be permitted to visit the workshops and laboratories of the National Research Council



*Canadian amazonite pin designed and made by Mrs. G. E. Steel, Toronto*

*Photos: Roseborough & Rice*

of Canada in Ottawa. There they can see what new materials, many of functional utility and grace, Canadian scientists have been developing. What is

needed most today is an extension of the admirable work of this Council to embrace research into new techniques of design in industry.



*Rug designed and woven by Karen Bulow, Montreal*

*(Note: The glass table is not of Canadian origin)*

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ANADIAN PRODUCTS DEVELOPED FOR WAR NEEDS ARE  
AVAILABLE FOR NEW EXPERIMENTS IN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

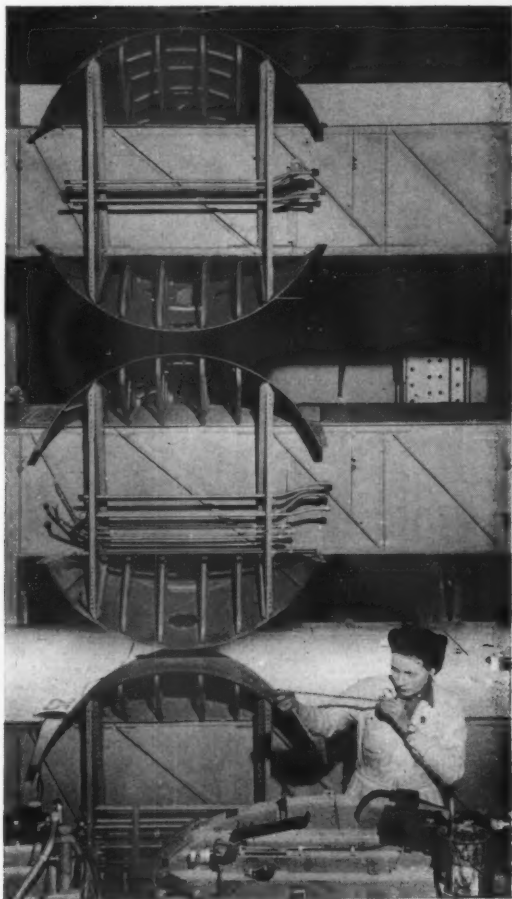


Photo: National Film Board

*Canadian plywood can be utilized for strength, lightness and beauty in construction. During war years they have been used particularly in airplane manufacture*

*Aluminum rods and fittings have also played a large part in airplane design. This metal and magnesium also can be adapted readily to peacetime experiments in industrial design*

# I THINK IT'S A CONSTABLE

BY ROBERT AYRE

OLD pictures never die, they simply come to Canada.

For generations we have been the dumping ground for Europe's rubbish and we like it; we dote on cast-offs; we are flattered into paying good money for them; to own a Sticks or a Rix or a Kotschenreiter or a Coutts-Michie confers upon us, we feel, a distinction we could never hope to attain by buying a Lismer, say, or a Lyman, a Masson or a Milne. It would be useful, I think, to examine our national humility, our contentment in the character of poor relation, but before we do that let us be so rude—if not downright wicked—as to ask ourselves the question: why, in the first place, should old pictures be allowed to go on living past their time and cluttering up the earth?

Men grow old . . . But we'd better not get ourselves tangled up in such dangerous subjects as periods of usefulness and euthanasia and who's to be the judge; it will be safer to limit ourselves to the things men make that outlive them.

It is a superstition that an old painting, just because it is a unique work, is more precious than, for instance, an old book. Great books never die; good books live beyond their generation; the others perish, no matter how popular they may have been in their lifetime. Where are the best-sellers of yesteryear? Who today gives shelf-room or mind-room to *If Winter Comes* or *The Wide, Wide World*, to say nothing of the numberless romances beloved by the Victorians, whose very titles are forgotten, however edifying they were in their heyday?

Their day is not ours; other times, other ways—choose your own platitude. They sink, to the bargain table, to the ten-cent stall on the street, until at last, burnt or returned to pulp, they are submerged in oblivion. Some of them hang around for a long time; a few are coddled because of sentimental associations that have nothing to do with merit or are treasured as curiosities, but for most of them we have no time or room: there are too many old books that are really worth reading and too many new books that are worth reading today even if they will not be read tomorrow.

It is otherwise with out-of-date pictures. If we have them, we cling to them, or try to find good homes for them—at a price, of course, for if they are old they must be valuable. If we have none, we buy them at auctions, even going so far as to import them. I suggest it is high time we organized a Society for the Decent Interment of Deceased Pictures.

The damp seeped in—read again the beginning of Chapter V in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*—and the 19th Century grew swollen and prolific. Pictures spawned like toadstools. As if they didn't have enough of their own, the Victorians brought in fungi from Belgium, Holland and Italy. The island was suffocated and when the people at last made up their minds to let in light and air they cleared out their litter by loading it on someone else. Why should they burn their rubbish? They weren't necessarily convinced it was rubbish, though times had changed; moreover, they found a ready market for it in the Colonies—all right, the Do-

minions; they shipped it to South Africa, the Antipodes and Canada. Travelling salesmen made their periodic tours; as many as five hundred lots could be knocked down at one auction sale extending over three and four sessions. We were told that it was our patriotic duty to "Buy British", which means van der Tonge, Diaz de la Pena, Verboeckhoven, Roman Ribera, de Blaas, van Sande Bakhuysen and Romio Pina, as well as Marcus Stone, Orchardson, Yeend King and Charles Stuart, R.I.

We bought, and we go on buying. Now I must be careful to admit that it isn't all rubbish. Good things are mixed in, though the people at home apparently didn't think them good enough to keep at home. Most of the pictures, however, are no better than mediocrities. Alexander Woolcott once confessed that he was a great writer with nothing to say. Many of the 19th Century painters were in the same boat: if they were not great they were talented enough to please their own generations; they corresponded to the popular novelists. If we of 1945 don't want the novels, why should we bother with the pictures? If they had anything to say once, they have nothing to say now to us.

Or have they? Apparently they have, or we shouldn't be buying them. We love the sheep and the cows, the fisher-folk, and the peasants carrying their faggots or saying grace over their simple meals, the riding to hounds, the noble stags and St. Bernard dogs, the kittens and the bunnies, the canals and wind-mills, the sailing ships, the Highland cattle in the misty glens—and oh, how we love the gloaming!—we can't get enough of cardinals, monks (especially merry monks), cavaliers and Arabs and girls from Capri; we are pleased and touched by love letters and affecting scenes and domestic crises, such as a broken jug.

Even if these things are good of their kind, what do they mean to Canada, 1945? Alas, Canada, 1945 often means England, 1860. In our tastes and sentiments we lag behind. There is in us a homesickness still. We still mistrust ourselves: we think that anything from abroad must be better than anything at home. Canada is too crude and her painters are of a piece with her. Just as sheep in an English meadow are more refined than the north wind in the pines of Georgian Bay, so are the brushstrokes of the men who painted them in the sixties; the old pictures are more refined, and finished.

More valuable, too. A dead R.I. or A.R.S.A., or even a dead Englishman, Scot or Dutchman without initials, is obviously better than a living Canadian, with or without initials. Pictures are an investment. Yet I wonder how shrewd, after all, are the people who invest in the old stuff they send us from overseas. If they could get a Constable, they might have something. It is surprising how often Constable turns up. Could the man possibly have painted so many? Is it likely that any really good Constables would be allowed out of England, at least through these channels?

Works of art sent to the United States must be accompanied by a declaration, sworn to or affirmed before the consul, that they are originals. We in Canada have no such legal protection. Dealers do give guarantees of authenticity and they may go no further than "attributed to". But, as far as I can learn, on inquiry at the Drugs and Fancy Goods Division of Canadian Customs, there is nothing in the law to say they must give such guarantees. The buyer must look out for himself. And what about self-deception? You can soon forget even the cautious "attributed to" if you like to think you have a Constable. You may go even

further. An investor brought a canvas to a Montreal dealer for valuation. "I think it's a Constable," he said expectantly. As tactfully as he could, consistent with honesty, the dealer doubted it. The practised eye could tell at a glance that it was a poor imitation. There was no signature. A few months later, another man came to the dealer. "I have bought a Constable," he said. "I'd like you to have a look at it." The dealer was astounded when he was confronted with the same picture. "I am not interested," he said. "I have already seen this picture. *I saw it before it was signed.*"

A young lady came to this dealer one day with several pictures painted by her uncle, now dead. Unfortunately, uncle had signed only with a monogram and the heiress, thinking this lacking in authority, had herself gone to the trouble of painting in his full name. Innocent enough, but it shows you how people value pictures and how easy it is to tamper with them to make your point.

Ignorance has much to do with it. I remember an old man who came into the Winnipeg School of Art years ago with a canvas wrapped up in a newspaper under his arm. It was a flimsy Italian potboiler, a landscape with a windmill, but he had heard the name Rubens and because he longed for a fortune he wanted his picture to be a Rubens. He wouldn't take no for an answer because he could descry in the grain of the canvas at the back, where it was rubbed by the stretcher, the letters R-U-B-E-N-S. The cloud, Polonius agreed, was like a camel; like a weasel, too; and like a whale.

There are fakes in Canada, but I have no intention of making charges of malpractice against anyone. The public is

only too willing to be duped and any swindling is likely to be the work of bootleggers. Dealers themselves may be deceived, out of sheer ignorance, though there is no excuse in these days when it is so easy to detect imitations and forgeries. It has been suggested that picture clinics be set up in the public galleries as a protection against the public's gullibility.

Expert advice would be useful, and we need education along these lines, but for the most part fakes are not so much our concern as the ordinary run-of-the-mill cast-offs that are loaded upon us. It doesn't matter if a van Donderdonk is a genuine van Donderdonk or not.

We waste our money when we spend it on trash from overseas; if we look upon pictures as an investment, we'd be wise to back a going concern, as many Canadian collectors are doing, for we are not all benighted. Not only do we waste our money, but we distort our values and, more important, I think: we live in a false world and do nothing to help in the development of our own real world, which is Canada, 1945. It is time we had outgrown our delight in Victorian anecdotes, our nostalgia for English duckponds and Highland glens. I am not arguing, "Be patriotic: buy Canadian". I am not against imports because they are imports. When England sends us good contemporary works that have a meaning for us, as she sometimes does, pictures that are alive and that can make a contribution to our development, let us by all means buy them. There can be no development if we try to be exclusively Canadian, and mediocrity at home is no better than mediocrity from abroad, but I think it is worthwhile to remember that we are Canadian, that we have a place and a time and an art of our own.



## A VERY PERSONAL ART

*Paul-Emile Borduas, whose painting "Les Arbres dans la Nuit" is reproduced here, was born at St. Hilaire, Quebec, in 1905. He studied there with Ozias Leduc; later at Sherbrooke and in Montreal, and in Paris with Desvallières and Maurice Denis. He is now teaching in Montreal. The following note on his work is from the article by Donald W. Buchanan on "Contemporary Painting in Canada" in the Special Canadian Issue of the Studio.*

**B**ORDUAS, whose upbringing was in rural Quebec, set out to be a painter of religious panels and murals. He came from Charlevoix County, an isolated district, where today a number of interesting "naïf" painters can be found. Some of their primitive work has attracted serious critical attention in recent years.

Borduas, after he left Charlevoix County, went to Montreal and then to France, where he studied under Maurice Denis. For many years afterwards, even as late as 1937 in Canada, his style still bore a resemblance to that master. He had, however, already turned away from the symbols of piety. The real break

with his past as an artist, the revelation that proved the intensity of his purely personal spiritualism, came a few years later when he began to experiment with the dreamlike practice of automatic drawing. New and powerful forms, colours that were often violent, in this way made their first appeal to him. These he then began to use consciously. He organized them into bold designs, which were often based on composition in movement, in the same way that music is. Far from being completely abstractionist, his designs are in fact related to natural objects, such as animals and trees. This mysticism which guides his feelings in the firm rock on which his personality as a painter is founded.

# STAGE DESIGN IN CANADA



*Above: Garden scene with the three main characters. Left: Colas, a village sage. From the marionette production of Mozart's operetta BASTIEN et BASTIENNE for the Montreal Festivals. Scenery by William Armstrong; costumes by Robert Langstadt; puppets by Albert Wolff.*

*Photos: Conrad Poirier, 151 Ballantyne Avenue, Montreal West*



# THEATRE — MONTREAL '44-45

BY GORDON WEBBER

IN presenting 'Theatre-Montreal '44-'45' the Community Players Theatre Library makes no attempt to offer an exhibition of pretty pictures but hopes to give the public some idea of the amount of work that has to be done before a play is produced. Too often is the layman ready to lavish all his praise upon actor and actress. Without trampling upon their doubtless merited laurels, we hope this presentation will give a broader conception of the vital role the theatre craftsman plays in the development of the dramatist's creation. We have drawn no lines between amateur and professional, since all serious theatre workers are professional in their approach to the theatre, and amateurs in their love for it." With these remarks the foreword to the catalogue introduces the exhibition of theatre designs recently held at the Art Association of Montreal. Presented by the Community Theatre Players Library the exhibition demonstrated the lively interest shown in the theatre in all its aspects by many Montreal groups.

One of the important things brought out in the display was the opportunities given through the theatre for designers, actors, directors and the general public to meet, discuss and exchange ideas, often for the first time. It must also be remembered that all the projects shown in the exhibition, and many others of merit not exhibited, were put into actual production during the past year.

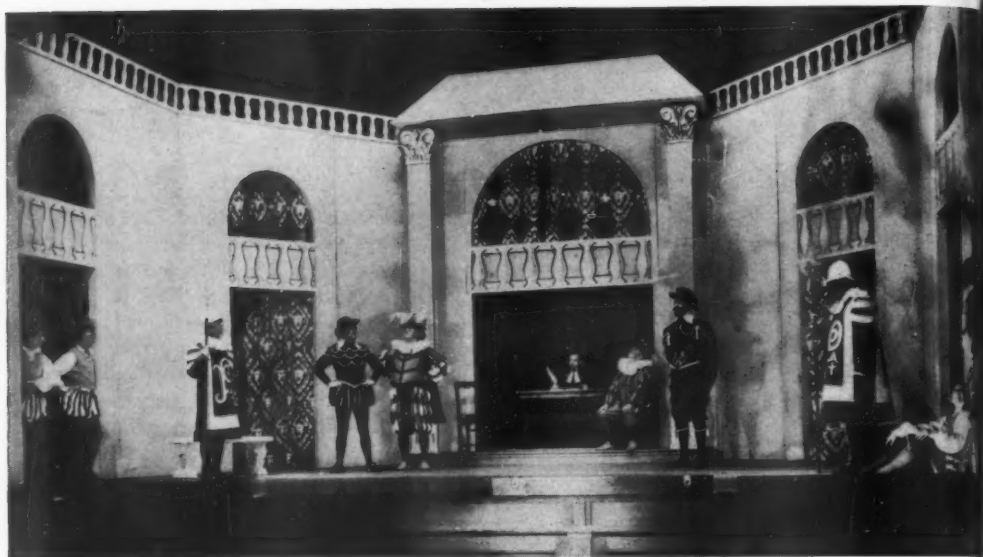
Of these productions those most enjoyed were those presented by the French groups. Here the complete artistry and spirit of enjoyment was due to the creative approach of the people involved, seen not only in the originality in the conception of the subject, but in the designer's free exploration of the use of symbols, colour, movement and light

within the area of the stage. The costumes also were designed as an integral part of the effect desired by the artists responsible for the staging. This sensitivity to the pleasures of colour and shapes is seen especially in pantomime and ballet. Alfred Pellan and Robert La Palme because of their imaginative understanding and effective use of all these elements were the most successful with their designs.

The English presentation of "There Shall be No Night", a little theatre production, necessitated a technique of special skill owing to the limited space of the available room which meant that the acting had to be practically done in the audience. This problem was satisfactorily solved by Quentin Lawrence, particularly in his setting for the school-room scene.

Another form of theatre which is still popular was seen in the marionette production of the Mozart operetta "Bastien et Bastienne" staged for the Montreal Festivals. Here again the visual and creative concept of the artist made this old composition a thing of spirit and charm. Puppets have also been used recently by the cultural committee of the Labour Progressive Party to dramatize trends and issues in current affairs. The productions travelled around the city at nights giving performances in the homes and meeting halls of the communities. Again the best theatre was produced when imagination and the creative approach combined to symbolize an idea.

The children's productions of the Educational Department of the Art Association of Montreal may be said to constitute the true art of the theatre. The children do the acting, create the sets, costumes and props. They develop their own methods as they go, and real experience in the art of expression is achieved



Stage set by Herbert Whittaker for "Much Ado about Nothing"      Shakespeare Society of Montreal



Costume design  
by Alfred Pellán  
for La Troupe  
"Madeleine et Pierre"

*Picrochole in  
"Picrochole ou  
les Coquecigrues"  
after Rabelais.  
Costume designs by  
Jean de Belval*

*Les Compagnons*



*Stage set by Robert La Palme for the revue "Fridolinons '45"*

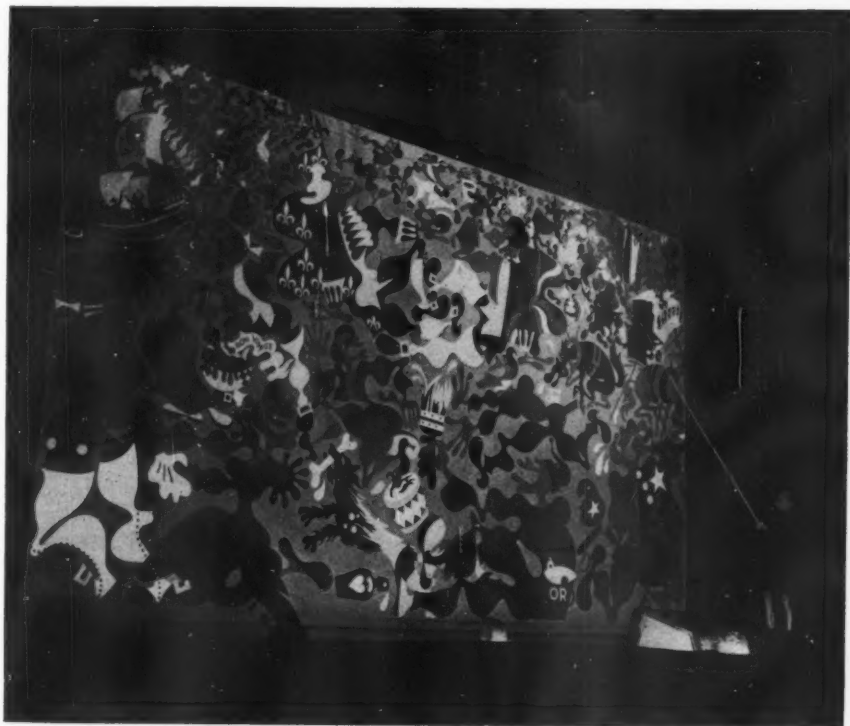
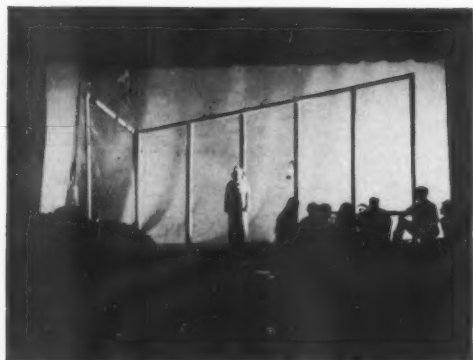




Photo: Carl

*Left: Stage set by Quentin Lawrence for "There Shall be No Night". Montreal Repertory Theatre. Below left: Stage set by Gordon Webber for "The Admirable Crichton". English Department, McGill University. Below centre: History through Art. Egypt by the 10 year olds. Educational department, Art Association of Montreal.*



for the spectator through the visual pattern designed by the children.

There are also other groups in Montreal such as church and school groups who have contributed to the theatre of expression and in so doing have utilized the actor's, dancer's, painter's and musician's creative ability in its fullest sense.

For this creative work to develop the

most urgent present need is for a theatre centre where this apparent talent can be appreciated for it has been the writer's personal experience as well as that of many others that it is almost impossible to know all the work of first rate calibre which is being done without some centre where the theatre may be enjoyed by the community as a whole.



# A NEW SCHOOL OF DESIGN

DESIGN has entered the common consciousness. Everywhere it is on everyone's lips, design in living, design in government, design in business. Not long ago business reached and took science to its bosom, with the result that science revitalized industry and great benefits accrued to both parties from the partnership. So it is reasonable to suppose that the union of design and business will inspire equally spectacular progress in both the fields of art and industry.

Alert to the necessities of the times, the Ontario Government has increased the endowment of the Ontario College of Art. This will enable the College to open an additional school which will be devoted exclusively to the teaching of design. In this new building will be co-ordinated all the departments of instruction relating to commercial art, interior decoration and manual industry. Here the student will be trained in the design of furniture, pottery, textiles, metal work, leather work and other handicrafts. The courses outlined will consist for all students of one year's basic training preparatory to choosing one or more particular courses out of eight or ten in which to specialize.

An outstanding feature of the new curriculum will be the addition to the staff of a full time lecturer, who will conduct courses throughout the four academic years on the history of civilization. For their practical work in this department students will be privileged to make full use of the vast storehouse

of material in the Royal Ontario Museum—now recognized as one of the great museums of the world. After becoming thoroughly acquainted with the history of man's artistic efforts from the Stone Age to modern times, and familiar with the traditional forms of all our arts and crafts, the student will concentrate on two-dimensional and three-dimensional abstract design. In this way one course will balance and complement the other, and from their correlation the student will be encouraged to produce ideas in an original form.

Thus the first concern of the staff will be the developing of designers for the various crafts and industries; the second, the training of craft teachers whose thorough knowledge will enable them to instruct in any type of school. The third objective, as soon as time and space permit will be the encouraging of the individual adult to take up handicraft. As hobbies the manual arts not only aid mental health but make for financial independence.

The government has recognized its responsibility concerning our artistic future by supporting the College of Art. The manufacturers have been awakened to the need of design in industry and are employing more and more of our graduates. It remains only for the general public to get behind products made in Canada and so encourage our artists and industrialists, working together, to develop distinctive Canadian design.

F. S. HAINES.

## CANADIAN HANDICRAFTS . . . *Continued from page 192*

linens made from home-grown and home-spun flax. About seventy-five varieties of cloth are hand-woven in New Brunswick. The weavers of Ontario, fewer in number, use blended wools which are very soft. Wanda Nelles and Joan Hall are the best known Ontario weavers but some others, especially Helen and Marjorie Cluff, make oddities such as cloth

woven from the fur of the angora rabbit and the shepherd dog.

Clothing design in Canada has not yet caught up with Paris and New York, but Canadian handicrafts have always held a unique place in sportswear. The Indians gave us the moccasin, the Eskimo gave us the parka and the early voyageurs left us the tradition of the *ceinture*

*Concluded on page 225*

# ART AND THE PEOPLE

BY DOROTHY MACPHERSON

**J**UST a year ago, on Wednesday, June 21st, 1944, on behalf of sixteen artists' societies, the "Brief Concerning the Cultural Aspects of Canadian Reconstruction" was presented to the Reconstruction Committee. "An acorn" said an article in the *Ottawa Journal*, "was planted on Parliament Hill."

Canadian artists are not unduly depressed by the delay in outward evidence of growth. The roots have taken hold and the rest is a matter of intensive cultivation. All over Canada people are coming together to paint, to study modelling, to experiment with the crafts, or simply to listen to recordings, to take part in radio discussion forums or to look at films. Other groups of enthusiasts are working on local projects and planning ways to obtain for their own communities the facilities for cultural enjoyment and development which for too long have been available only to the residents of our larger cities. The gulf between art and the people may well be bridged in our generation, so limitless and universally accessible are modern means of mass education.

The National Gallery is the sponsor of a display, now nearing completion in the Displays Division of the National Film Board, which illustrates the immense variety of cultural activities carried on by community art centres in Canada, Great Britain and the United States. The opening panels show graphically how people in early communities were forced to provide for their needs by the work of their own hands, and in so doing, evolved a high degree of creative skill. The development of tools, from the simple artifacts of our primitive ancestors to the complex machines of today, has revolutionized conditions of life and work. The burden of unrelenting toil has been lifted from present-day com-

munities, but employment on monotonous, repetitive processes and the specialization necessary when quantity rather than excellence is the criterion of success, have deprived all but a few of the chance to develop their finer powers in their daily work. For the majority of people in the western democracies, opportunities for cultural development in the increased leisure time brought them by the machine are, even today, painfully few.

The original artist barely makes a living, while our homes are swamped with mass-produced examples of pseudo-art which accord all too well with the commercialized cinema and radio programs that serve the mass of our people as substitutes for creative activity.

The demand for community art centres is part of a spontaneous reaction in the democratic countries by artist and society alike against these conditions. It has been heightened by the wartime need of the State to mobilize all the capacities of its citizens and by a new appreciation of the refreshment and strength to be derived from the highest works of human genius. The display has a picture of Myra Hess playing in the National Gallery at one of the lunch-hour concerts which were attended by some 3,000 people every week and not once postponed, even at the height of the London blitz, and near it are pictures of typical young Canadians listening to recordings in the library at London, Ontario, and a party of Ukrainian musicians, one of the many racial groups whose traditional music may be shared with their neighbours in a community art centre.

Many excellent photographs indicate the rich variety of entertainment which can be brought into the life of any community with a good auditorium; drama





*Photo: National Gallery*

### *Children's art classes*

and musical festivals, travelling theatre and ballet companies, concerts and recitals. A chain of such halls and properly constructed exhibition galleries across Canada would greatly reduce touring costs of concerts, shows and art exhibitions. Music and art would reach a nation-wide audience, with immediate economic benefit to the producers of living art, and, through the encouragement of native talent and a gradual rise in the standards of public taste, with long-term enhancement of Canadian cultural prestige.

"Your art centre" says panel 6, "may grow around an existing institution, an art gallery, a library, a school or a community hall. It may be housed in a building of its own. Or it may be part of a larger community centre, built as a war memorial or as a normal neighbourhood development." The striking disparity between some of the centres illustrated is evidence of the vitality of the

idea and its adaptability to any type of community. There is utter contrast in four pictures from the United States, the clapboard store which housed the Federal Art Centre at Melrose, New Mexico and the impeccable modernity of the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis; between the suave horizontals of the beautiful building at Palo Alto, California, and the South Side (Chicago) Art Centre. But the young figures approaching this converted down-town residence with such vigorous expectancy are a convincing argument against waiting until a perfect setting is provided by government or private donor.

Many of the pictures illustrate projects carried out by art galleries and libraries, including picture loan societies, film showings, film and record libraries, radio-discussion groups, and the role of these two institutions as starting-points for many-sided cultural activities is stressed throughout.

The display ends with a challenge to action, indicating the services of the National Gallery, National Film Board and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on which local centres can draw and which can be channelled through them to outlying regions. Communities intending to establish art centres might first of all survey their existing resources (the Junior League outline, *Arts and Our Town*, price fifty cents, has been found a useful basis for such a study); discover the wishes and needs of the people who will use them; form a community association or similar group to work out a practical basis for organization and finance; and, when all this is done, write to the National Gallery about it.

There are two pictures in this display of work by miners in the English village of Ashington, one a flower piece, the other a carving made with pen-knives

from a piece of discarded pit prop. The average age of the members of this group is 40, and the oldest is 73. They came together to work and study simply because they wanted to understand what artists are trying to say. Listen to one of them, the man who handles the explosives in the pit:

"You know I get a new sort of kick in using my hands and making things. Here I find an outlet for other things than earning my living; there is a feeling of being my own boss for a change and with it comes a sense of freedom. When I have done a piece of painting, I feel that something has happened not only to the canvas, but to myself. For a time I have enjoyed a sense of mastery—of having made something real."

No words could better sum up the people's case for community art centres.

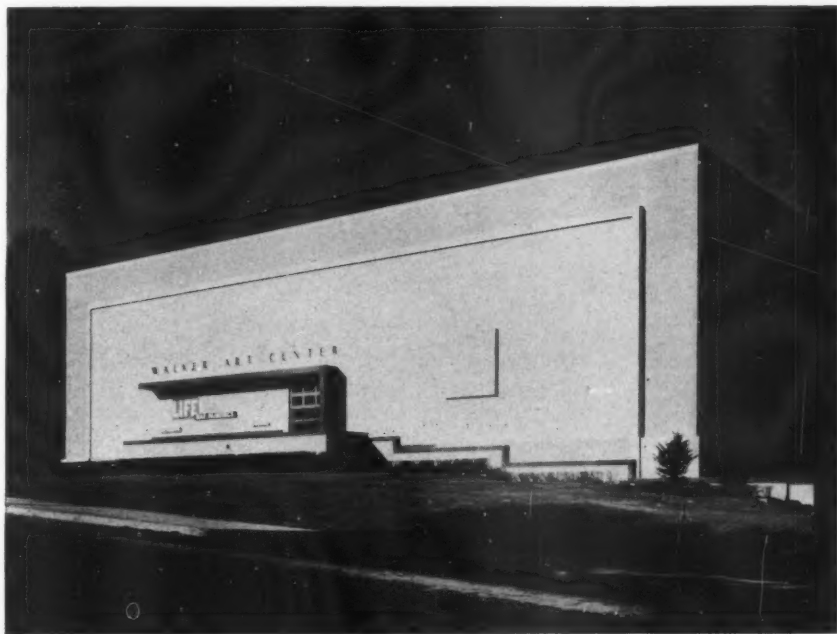


Carving by a miner, cut with pen knives from a piece of oak salvaged from the scrap heap of a pit head.



*Melrose  
Federal  
Art Centre,  
Melrose,  
New Mexico  
W.P.A.  
Federal  
Art  
Project*

*The photographs shown here and on the following pages  
are from the exhibition sponsored by the National Gallery  
entitled "What an Art Centre can do for Your Community"*



*Walker  
Art  
Centre,  
Minneapolis*



*Rural  
travelling  
libraries*

*Rec  
danc*

*Services to neighbouring communities*



*Shipment of  
educational  
displays  
or art  
exhibitions*

*Recreational  
dancing*



*Typical art centre activities*



*Choirs and  
glee clubs*

*Photo: National Film Board*



## COAST TO COAST IN ART

AMEDEO MODIGLIANI

*The Student*

*Recently exhibited at the  
Dominion Gallery, Montreal,  
and sold to a purchaser  
in New York*

### **The Canada Foundation**

The recently announced incorporation of The Canada Foundation is a matter of unusual interest. The new body aims to provide encouragement to all forms of artistic endeavour in Canada, and to stimulate the exchange of cultural interests between Canada and other countries.

The incorporators of the Foundation have expressed the opinions that artistic pursuits in Canada have never received the financial support they deserve and need, and that Canada lags far behind most other countries in giving attention to national cultural matters. The Foundation is planning a long-range program to remedy both these conditions. It intends to raise an initial fund of one million dollars, through contributions, bequests and fees. Substantial cash awards and grants are to be made available, mainly through recognized organizations, to Canadians whose artistic talents deserve recognition and encouragement.

The Canada Foundation was granted a

Dominion charter upon the application of Mr. Justice J. T. Thorson, Mr. George Glazebrook, Dr. E. A. Corbett, Mrs. G. V. Ferguson, Mr. John Grierson, Mr. A. D. Dunton, Mr. Arthur L. Phelps and Senator L. M. Gouin. Membership is to be enlarged at once, to enable the Foundation to set up panels of recognized authorities. Walter B. Herbert is Director of the new organization, with offices at 728 Ottawa Electric Building, Ottawa.

### **Recent Exhibitions in Montreal**

There was much regret in Montreal when M. Parizeau, feeling that he must give more attention to his publishing business, decided to close his gallery on Peel Street. This handsome and comfortable little gallery has been the scene of many exciting exhibitions. One of the most stimulating, to those interested in the strictly contemporary, was the "exposition de la jeune peinture canadienne" in April, when 28 young Quebec painters presented 35 works. It is significant of the trend of Canadian painting, in Montreal, at any rate, that theirs is an indoor



art; there was not a single landscape to be seen; the pictures were all figures, clothed and nude, abstractions and still lifes. The colours were bold and anything but naturalistic and the figures frequently childlike in their straightforward simplicity; some visitors found the pictures offensive—for instance, the red-headed Jesus in modern trousers—but if there was audacity and crudity, there was the spirit of adventure, which we have a right to expect from youth. Easier on the orthodox were the Canadian water colour landscapes which were shown in May, Parizeau's last show. They were by Rafal Malczewski, the Polish painter who was much honored in Europe before he fled from the Nazis and came to Canada nearly three years ago by way of Brazil. He has a delicate touch.

At the Art Association John S. Walsh has had a one-man show of his oils, water colours and drawings. Many of these are impressions of the contemporary scene noted during his travels in Canada and the United States while he was attached to a British mission concerned with war production.

### ***News from the Maritimes***

At the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Maritime Art Association member groups reported on the growth of interest in the community centre movement. New projects have also been sponsored. Among these is a survey of the talented youth, between twelve and eighteen, of the three Maritime provinces, which is to be made with a view to directing the attention of educational and other authorities to such talent, and to obtain grants to assist the child in modest circumstances. Miss Violet A. Gillett was elected president for the coming year.

The Saint John Art Club in a recent study of local art problems has recommended the establishment of art supervision in the schools of Saint John and the promotion of an annual children's

exhibition. Work in connection with a community centre for the city has gone ahead and the recommendations of the Club's special committee for a centrally located building, with an art gallery and an auditorium with a minimum seating capacity of 800, have been adopted. Smaller exhibition rooms, class rooms, shipping room and canteen are included in the plan.

Jack Humphrey is directing the painting course of the summer School of the Fine Arts at Queen's University, Kingston.

The Prince Edward Island Art Society at its annual meeting in June elected Mrs. Willard MacKay as president. Among the exhibitions held during the year was one of the work of Stanley Royle, Director of the College of Fine Arts at Mount Allison University.

The Eighth Annual Children's Art Exhibition, sponsored by the Fredericton Art Club was held in May.

This year's summer school at the Observatory Art Centre, University of New Brunswick, is again under the direction of Pegi Nicol MacLeod, who recently arrived in Fredericton from New York.

### ***Children in Sculpture***

The recent exhibition of Eugenia Berlin's "Children's Portraits in Sculpture" at the T. Eaton Fine Art Galleries in Toronto reveals this artist's ability to express certain qualities universal to childhood—a combination of innocence, naïveté, mischief and shrewdness which Miss Berlin has depicted with sympathy and a personal awareness of the indefinable charm of childhood itself. The majority of the heads are modelled in plaster, and there is good sense of the bone structure underneath the round surface softness. Most important of all, however, is the fact that the artist has caught the essential individuality of each child in what one feels is its most characteristic mood and expression.

### **Federation Notes: Quebec Region**

Quebec's six per cent "luxury tax" has been abandoned. The Quebec Region of the Federation of Canadian Artists does not take credit for the defeat of a highly unpopular measure, but it had something to do with it for it did join in the protests. In a letter to the Government, Robert Ayre, chairman of the region, strongly protested against the tax "in the interests of living Canadian artists, and in the interests of the public, to whom, we believe, art is not a luxury but an important part of civilized life." He said: "Traditionally and in practice, Quebec leads all the provinces of the Dominion in support of the arts and thus incurs the high regard of artists and of everyone interested in the promotion of culture in Canada. To them, the six per cent tax your government is imposing is highly anomalous, invidiously singling out one profession for taxation. The measure will be detrimental to the good name of the province and to public welfare. In no country at any time has a tax been levied upon sales of works of art until fifteen years after the death of their authors."

Under the chairmanship of F. B. Taylor, the region's sub-committee on community centres is canvassing more than seventy-five Montreal community organizations to obtain their active support in urging the Dominion Government to give due consideration to cultural aspects of reconstruction and to foster the Federation's program for the establishment of community centres as living war memorials. It is asking these groups to forward resolutions to this end to the Minister of Reconstruction. Before the Dominion election, the sub-committee sent a questionnaire to the Montreal candidates of the principal political parties, to determine their attitude and to urge them to support the program upon their election to Parliament.

"Democracy depends for its success on the wide-ranging sensibility of its people as much as it depends on its knowledge,"

said Lawren Harris, national president, addressing a public meeting in the Art Association lecture hall during a visit to Montreal in the spring. "When we in Canada make all of the creative arts an organic part of our life we may then realize our highest possibilities but not before then . . . If we can have workers in all the arts and all the people participating in the life of the arts," he said, "it will do more to promote national unity than anything else. Dynamic community centres for the arts located from coast to coast can do more to transform the life of our people than any other agency."

While he was in Montreal, Mr. Harris formally opened the Federation's new studio workshop on Beaver Hall Square. Ernest Lindner, who was a guest, told the members of developments in Saskatoon. The studio is being used by life groups drawing from the model, by a silk screen group and a potters' group, and for small exhibitions and meetings.

### **Comment from Russia**

The following extracts are from an interesting letter recently received by the Director of the National Gallery from A. M. Gerasimov, President of VOKS, the Fine Arts Section of the U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, Moscow.

"The Fine Arts Section . . . sincerely thanks you for the journals and catalogues on Canadian art . . . Soviet art circles were very meagerly informed about modern Canadian art and the material you sent therefore aroused great interest among our artists and critics . . .

"In becoming acquainted with the present state of art in Canada we found . . . that Canadian artists had been very active during the war . . . Our attention was particularly arrested by the important theoretical problems . . . which Canadian artists raised as at (the) Conference of Canadian Artists, and the problem of the artist's place and role in war time, raised by the leading article in *Canadian Art* (December-January

Emanuel Hahn was commissioned by the Society of St. John the Evangelist, Bracebridge, Ontario, to execute this crucifix. The figure, about life size, is to be cast in metal, a light silvery alloy, mounted on a cross of oak. The crucifix is to be placed on an outdoor altar, adjacent to the chapel, as a memorial of the last World War, 1914-1918.



1943-1944). The examples given in this journal of front-line sketches by Will Ogilvie, Campbell Tinning and Charles Comfort strike us as extremely convincing in the sharpness and liveliness of their perceptions and the . . . impressions of episodes of the war which artists in the army can observe directly and imprint in their work.

"We would be most obliged if you could send us *Canadian Art* regularly. . .

"Many of the younger Soviet artists are in the front lines, where they are accumulating truthful pictorial material about the outstanding events of the war, about the life of the heroic Red Army which has driven the Nazi invaders from our country . . .

"A vital problem for Soviet art today is that of mural painting, for artists will have an important role to play in the reconstruction of the Soviet cities destroyed by the Nazis. They will be called upon to decorate the public buildings that are being reconstructed or erected anew by Soviet architects. Soviet monumental art is of a realistic nature

and is devoted to the outstanding events of the war.

"We should like to add . . . a few words about the galleries and museums of Moscow, which are now going through a period of busy activity since the re-evacuation of all the valuable objects of art that were removed to safety far inland when Moscow was a target for enemy air raids. The masterpieces of old Russian art—paintings by Repin, Surikov, Alexander Ivanov and other masters and collections of the finest work by Soviet artists have been returned to their places in the Tretyakov Gallery; the Museum of Modern Western Art has its collection of French impressionists back again and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts its outstanding collection of Dutch painters and other masterpieces of western art. These museums will soon re-open their doors to the numerous visitors who have always thronged their halls.

"Please accept our sincere regards and hopes for continued friendly relations with the representatives of art in Canada and the U.S.S.R."

# NEW BOOKS ON THE ARTS

## OIL PAINTING FOR THE BEGINNER.

By Frederick Taubes. New York: Watson-Guptill. \$6.00 (\$7.00 or \$7.50 in Canada).

While this book is written ostensibly for beginners it would be a very useful reference book for any painter to keep about.

For some years past there has been so much written about other mediums that the impression has been created that oil painting has many limitations. This idea has been further extended by the mild and superficial way many painters use this medium—taking the vigour out of colours by too much mixing on the palette,—by using too much white and employing turpentine to make the colour flow easily and in failing to build up the colour by underpainting.

There is much sound advice in the book of a technical nature: materials to paint on, the quality of pigments and the nature of oils and varnishes. But above all it is the craftsman's approach to painting; first the tools and the materials, then learning to use them intelligently—distinguishing between opaque and transparent colours, attaining solidity with certain colours and luminosity with others and achieving a wide diversity of qualities by underpainting and glazing. Mr. Taubes makes no claims for the discovery of a new or easy road for the aspiring artist. He simply tells us how he goes about painting.

The book is illustrated with eight colour plates and many black and white drawings. It deals with figure painting, still life and landscape. Here in Canada where we have less than four people to the square mile, another chapter or so devoted to landscape would have been appreciated.

A. Y. JACKSON.

## PAUL STRAND: PHOTOGRAPHS 1915-

1945. By Nancy Newhall. 32 pp., 23 plates. New York: Museum of Modern Art. \$1.50.

"The work of Paul Strand has become a legend"—says Nancy Newhall—and, like most legends, may prove troublesome if its significance is imperfectly understood. Those who know the man and are familiar with the rich variety of his thirty-year output would never dream of labelling Strand an exponent of "art for art's sake." Yet a casual examination of certain periods of his work might, for the unwary, produce exactly that reaction. This preoccupation with the shapes and textural patterns of leaves, rocks, machines, trees and crumbling buildings—does it not reflect in him a flight from consideration of the pressing social problems of his day? How could this same man, later transformed into a ciné director-photographer, have been involved in

the production of such passionately social, not to say political, documents as "The Wave", "Native Land" and "Heart of Spain" (which deals with the work of our own Dr. Norman Bethune)?

This paradox evaporates when one analyses the 'necessities', both social and aesthetic, under which Strand and indeed most pioneers of modern photography had to work. There is little doubt that Strand, Steiglitz, Sheeler, to mention Americans only, and later Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray in Europe were deeply out of sympathy with the social and probably the political trends dominating their formative years. They may, consciously or unconsciously, have harboured a desire to escape from the hopeless strife into some fancied self-sufficiency of art (expressed in abstractionist experimentation), but the results they produced had revolutionary implications for the succeeding generation.

Does not this sort of thing happen whenever artists are faced with a hostile milieu so powerfully entrenched as to discourage hope of radical change? Their revolutionary drive is transferred to the art-form itself, usually with beneficial results to the medium—if not to the prosperity of the artist.

In the case of Paul Strand and his colleagues, they stripped photography of its sentimentality, its prettified, romantic approach to subject matter and, almost gleefully, rubbed peoples' noses in the stark realities of the modern world. They gradually imposed on us a new way of seeing things and if they were, in the process, immersed in abstractionist experiments it was always abstraction as a necessary starting-point—as a discipline necessary for us as well as for them.

They were lucky; the new vision they created has become a weapon in the hands of a new generation. For, in contrast to the twenties, social change is now a practical possibility and the social resources of the camera, so patiently explored by Strand, are everywhere being exploited under the banner of 'documentary'.

This slim monograph, in the familiar 'M.M.A.' format, is designed to accompany the first of a series of one-man retrospective exhibitions devoted to the major American and European photographers. It is a disappointing production in one important respect: the 23 plates do not begin to render the tonal richness of the originals. It is true that Strand's platinum prints are unique and could not be exactly reproduced by any printing process now available, but

one nevertheless expects a higher standard than this from the Museum of Modern Art.

One point more: could we not expect that, someday, somehow, either the Dominion or the Quebec Archivist might acquire Strand's two magnificent series on the Gaspé? H.S.

**LANGUAGE OF VISION.** By Gyorgy Kepes. 228 pp.; 318 illustrations. Montreal: Cambridge Press. \$8.50.

"Today we experience chaos," says Gyorgy Kepes. "Advances in science and technology have created a new dimension. . . . The inherited structure of a smaller, outgrown world, however, stands in the way of the integration of our lives in the terms of the present wider dimension. . . . To achieve a livable life today, we must reorient ourselves and create forms in terms of present historical conditions. . . . The language of vision, optical communication, is one of the strongest potential means both to reunite man and his knowledge and to reform man into an integrated being. . . ."

Supported in forewords, by S. Giedion and S. I. Hayakawa, the semantics expert of the Illinois Institute of Technology, who points out that the language we inherit is at once a tool and a trap, that languages need to be revised, and that the language of vision has its clichés as well as the verbal languages, the young Hungarian painter, teacher, experimentalist and commercial designer sets out to tell the creative artists what they must do "if the language of vision is to be made a potent factor in reshaping our lives." He discusses their task under three heads—plastic organization, visual representation and dynamic iconography.

This is a book to be studied, not skimmed, and it would take a longer review than we have space for to give a full account of it. Highly technical—dealing in such matters as psychology and physiology, going into detail on light and colour, spatial sensations and tensions, perspective, the inter-relationship of forms and dynamic equilibrium—it will be of interest mainly to artists, students and teachers, and particularly to those in the advertising and industrial field who, as Mr. Giedion suggests, have a responsibility in forming public taste. Yet it is so stimulatingly written and so wonderfully illustrated that it should appeal to the intelligent layman who is interested in finding out what makes "modern art" tick and why.

Not only does Mr. Giedion in his introduction throw responsibility on the advertising man. Mr. Kepes closes his book with a challenge to him. Unhandicapped by traditional forms, by its very nature contemporary and forceful, advertising can use the most advanced techniques. By its visual publicity, it can dis-

seminate socially useful messages, and can "train the eye, and thus the mind, with the necessary discipline of seeing beyond the surface of visible things, to recognize and enjoy values necessary for an integrated life. If social conditions allow advertising to serve messages that are justified in the deepest and broadest social sense, advertising art could contribute effectively in preparing the way for a positive popular art, an art reaching everybody and understood by everyone." Yes, this is a book that should be on the desk of the art director of every advertising agency. R.A.

**A PLACE TO LIVE.** By Hazen Sise. Cover design by "Mayo". Canadian Affairs Series. Vol. 2, No. 7. 20 pp. Ottawa: Wartime Information Board.

It is unfortunate that we have had to look upon elegant typography and sophisticated layout with a certain amount of suspicion, being on our guard against the big-time advertisers whose unblushing mis-statements are inclined to lurk behind such blandishments. On the other hand we are frankly bored by the ponderous innocence of the official publications. This dilemma pursues a good deal of our contemporary modes of expression and makes pamphleteering a tricky business. The series of W.I.B. pamphlets entitled "Canadian Affairs" has sought to overcome this difficulty by presenting a sophisticated façade covering an interior whose rather undistinguished lay-out achieves a certain authenticity. Amidst the sterilities of life in the services the cover designs are pretty to look at. Occasionally one might even read what is inside. Particularly one called "A Place to Live" by Hazen Sise.

This contains discussion material on the subject of housing and community planning. It provides an excellent resumé of the present situation in housing and presents a sound view of the neighbourhood principle of planning. The interesting suggestion is also made here that the resurrection of our cities may germinate from the community centre movement, with these centres forming nuclei from which to expand neighbourhood planning. Is this not a somewhat unrealistic aspiration since real progress is more likely to grow out of the creation of entirely new suburban communities rather than from the re-integration of existing urban areas? In new estates housing must inevitably precede the community centre which cannot therefore be the vital embryo. However, this adds a useful controversial touch to the discussion. Altogether the author has presented an imaginative and well-detailed review of the whole subject with a remarkable economy of words.



The list of books recommended for study brings to light the glaring absence of any reading material really relevant to Canadian conditions. "The Culture of Cities" is a monumental book that had to be written but it almost succeeded in burying our cities under a sandstorm of words and words and words.

H.S.M.C.

#### COMMUNITY CENTRES IN CANADA.

*Reprint from the Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, May 1945. Toronto: The Ryerson Press. 25c.*

Here is a worthy brochure incorporating four articles on the community centre idea. Supporters of the movement increase almost weekly, but at present with little co-ordination of effort to be noticed amongst them, and no information centre for exchange of data and views, no publication which may act as forum for them. The R.A.I.C. Journal is therefore to be congratulated for this useful contribution.

A major difficulty in developing the community centre movement lies in the fact that most people feel they know the problem and the answer, yet each has his or her own concept of a community or a centre, and, as so often, confusion and contradiction arise for want of definition of terms. The important thing is to recognize on all sides that no one concept need be exclusive of others. In this case the more cooks the richer the broth.

The contributions in the booklet under review to some extent repeat themselves in approaching the subject largely from the physical planning point of view. However, the need for an approach involving much more than mere physical planning is stressed repeatedly.

Marcus Adeney, looking backward, reminds us that after the last war much talk on the same theme came to little. He points to the social needs which only such a movement can satisfy, considers the many sources of support for a network of centres, makes reference to various undertakings already to be found across Canada. Lionel Scott, in "Some Facts about Community Centres" deals with the experience of Wartime Housing Ltd., their experiments and their findings, and lists basic requirements and general recommendations based on lessons learned to date by the many rudimentary, but enthusiastic community centres sponsored by Wartime Housing. Gwen Fife, in her role as community counsellor, stresses that "four walls do not a centre make," but proceeds to supply common sense suggestions to the architects in order that the walls may encompass maximum utility. William H. Conrad tells of the temporary wartime housing projects in the United States, and their findings as to varieties of service suitable through community centres,

and the facilities and proportionate areas required for the various functions usually included in centre activities.

The brochure appends a useful list of some sixteen publications related to the community centre movement. All publications mentioned are well worth perusal, although the present paucity of literature indicates the need for more organized thought and expression on the subject than is yet in evidence.

Of the items listed in the bibliography perhaps the most pertinent to readers of *Canadian Art* is "Arts and Our Town", a plan for a community cultural study prepared for the Association of Junior Leagues of America. It provides a check-list for determining the opportunity for practice and appreciation of the arts in any community, by investigation of the cultural opportunities provided, or which might be provided, through such agencies as museums, public libraries, theatres, concert series, retail stores, radio stations, schools, public recreation programs, churches, service clubs, housing projects, labour organizations, art groups and the like. Such a survey would seem an essential preliminary to the planning of community centres in Canada. Who would be better suited to assist in such volunteer field work than the sixteen national cultural associations who presented the Brief to the Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment a year ago? It is satisfactory to find a digest of the Brief included in the brochure under review, and to be reminded of the early and lively expression of support for the community centre movement from the various art groups.

Worth watching for, particularly by those whose initial interest is through the arts, is a book now in preparation in Britain by C.E.M.A. (Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts—not S.E.M.A. as mis-stated in the R.A.I.C. brochure). Due for publication early in the summer, the volume will be composed of sections describing and illustrating art centres in Britain, Sweden and Russia. In addition blueprints and photographs of the model art centre suggested by C.E.M.A. as suitable for communities of 20,000 (plus or minus) in Britain, and probable reference to planning now underway for more specialized accommodation for towns of about 70,000 will be included. How far the British scheme may be applicable to Canada remains to be seen, but the creditable record of C.E.M.A. as a government undertaking which flourished despite wartime difficulties should not fail to stir other governments. Artist groups here would do well to acquaint themselves with C.E.M.A.'s organizational structure and achievements, with a view to urging similar government support and activity for cultural activities in Canada.



After personal observation of community centre developments in the States, in England and various continental countries, it is good to return to Canada and find so healthy a stirring from the roots up, from the people themselves. In few other places have the interest and response been so indigenous, so varied as to source and kind. Canadian experiments and achievements mean that we already have a movement to be aided and encouraged by work and funds, not merely an ideal to be fondled in the abstract.

As his text Marcus Adeney chooses a challenging sentence: "Thou hast a handful of seed, and this is a fine country." The need now is for co-ordination of information, professionally directed surveys and research and encouragement through reasonable subsidies from the top. From community, town and city there is no shortage of enthusiasm, no lack of recognition of exciting possibilities. But the many hundreds of requests for information (many of them directed outside the country for want of a central information source to turn to here) indicate clearly that professional advice and direction are called for.

The artists voiced their desire to contribute a year ago. Our Wartime Housing authority, over the past few years, in its profusion of community halls, the Department of Veterans' Affairs in its encouragement of citizens' committees, have pointed a way and provided a proving ground for many essentially community centre activities. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has devoted talks to the subject. The National Film Board has available a number of films on varied aspects of this theme. Social scientists, whose job in essence is to concern themselves with this focal point of social relations, will of necessity, come to the fore in the movement.

The next obvious and urgent step is for the Federal Government itself to recognize the promise inherent in the many enquiries now coming from all sides, and to foster interest and to encourage action by establishing an information centre. Under whatever may be deemed the most appropriate official aegis, a rounded group should be drawn, embodying representatives from such diverse quarters as the Department of Health and Welfare, architects and town planners, educators and sociologists, and representatives of music, drama, the visual arts and film. Of urgent necessity is a survey of developments to date, both in this and other countries, and the possibility of making such information available to all, that errors might be avoided, and achievements emulated.

In its modest way the architectural press brochure has cleared away a few cobwebs. Other groups might well undertake to prepare similar brochures stressing their particular angles of interest, while awaiting the formation of an official co-ordinating body in Ottawa.

C. CALVERT.

**THE ARTS AND CRAFTS OF CANADA.** By D. G. W. McRae. 80 pp. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1944. \$2.50.

At the present time the literature dealing with Canadian Art is so dispersed" writes Mr. McRae, "that a general appreciation of it is difficult to obtain. And so it is hoped that this book may in some small way make up the deficiency." The author has gathered together 186 illustrations which have been compressed into sixty pages under the six headings of Architecture (British-Canadian, French-Canadian and Contemporary Canadian), Painting, Sculpture and Crafts. There are also 15 pages of text.

Although Mr. McRae protests his modesty in thus undertaking to delineate our artistic heritage, he has inevitably invited criticism which, I am afraid, may not be entirely favourable. To encompass such a wide range of material, reflecting so many derivations, requires a very shrewd selective process that must be based on some recognisable scheme, both of period and subject. This author does not, however, reveal his criteria of selection. Of what are these examples intended to be "representative"? In the introduction it is stated that "Canadian Art may be divided approximately into four periods . . .". But no dates are attached to the illustrations so that to the uninitiated (for whom the book is presumably intended) the relation of the examples to one another must be quite obscure. For instance, in the section on Contemporary Architecture, we find a photograph of the Montreal Art Gallery inserted somewhat incongruously between two industrial buildings of the nineteen-forties. Why? In the section on Painting we find, consecutively, a portrait by

see the review in this issue of canadian art

## language of vision

by GYORGY KEPES

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Prudence Heward, some tanks at Camp Borden by A. J. Casson, "A Dead Stag" by Krieghoff and "Dieppe" by Morrice. Why? What is Mr. McRae trying to tell us about Canadian art? If this is an objective index, it is most inadequately documented and lacking in schematic arrangement. Or is it a subjective projection of Mr. McRae's own tastes? One is inclined to believe that it must be the latter for how otherwise could three times as much space have been devoted to architecture as to painting—surely an improper emphasis in appraising Canadian culture. And how otherwise is one to account for the complete omission of the Gothic Revival influence upon Ontario domestic architecture?

The 29 examples chosen for the section on Painting would have proved quite appropriate for a brief play-by-play commentary on the development of technique and attitude but, in the unchronological order in which they appear, they defy analysis and comprehension.

The 22 examples of sculpture provide, perhaps, the most refreshing element in the book and serve as a timely reminder of some delightful Canadian work which is neglected because of the geographical isolation of each piece.

Most of the illustrations of the crafts are too small to reveal the surface textures which are so essential to an appreciation of the tactile qualities peculiar to objects formed with hand tools.

In spite of the critical attitude that must be provoked by the arbitrary manner in which Mr. McRae has carried out his survey, he may yet be said to have achieved his purpose if he has revealed the extremely inadequate documentation of our architectural heritage. For his historical examples the author has had to rely largely on the files of Professors Eric Arthur and Ramsay Traquair, those two distinguished pioneers in this field. Is it not time, as Mr. McRae suggests, that a really comprehensive record was assembled for publication? An alert photographer with some sunshine and imagination accompanied by an historian with wit and a knowledge of the arts, could perform an invaluable service in projecting Canada upon the inquisitive United Nations. (Page the National Gallery and the National Film Board!). If he has made a step towards this more authoritative accomplishment, Mr. McRae will have deserved our thanks and will, I hope, forgive the critical attitude of this reviewer. H.S.M.C.

**WATERCOLOR DEMONSTRATED.** By 23 American Artists. New York: Watson-Guption Publications. \$5.00.

The practising painter of watercolors will find in this work matter for refreshment, the student many valuable suggestions as to material and methods, while the layman may learn what

is put down and how, in constructing a watercolor.

It is quite understandable that many of the best painters in watercolor of the United States are not demonstrators in this book. Some of the work illustrated may seem to be distinctly "old hat" but there are also specimens with real vitality, substance and original feeling.

Incidental are ideas which have to do with art-expression as distinguished from manipulation of paint and its effects. "No medium can be so guilty of shallow meaningless fireworks as watercolor", is a quotation from one of the contributing artists. Another declares, "The important relationship isn't between (the artist's) daub of paint and the object it represents but between the paint area and other paint areas on his paper".

It is the exposition of the craft of watercolor, technical procedure, materials and their use, that gives the book its considerable interest. In several instances, illustrated accounts are presented of the making of a watercolor from start to finish.

One painter uses only one brush; another, six or seven. The number of pigments ranges from eight to twenty-two. Paper may go all the way from "kid finish" to cold-pressed rough, which is favored by the majority.

There is a variety of preference for the amount and kind of preliminary drawing, for wet or dry paper or in combination, and for beginning painting with dark and middle tones or light and middle tones. In one example a precise drawing in pencil is covered with carefully valued washes; in another, the composition is created with color areas that balance at every stage of the picture. When skies are part of the composition they come usually near the beginning, but by one artist are painted almost last.

In the final chapter, where the painting of clouds is demonstrated, a mode of paint manipulation effects the subtle volumes and varied edges of these vaporous masses.

There is useful information about equipment throughout the book, and some problems that are encountered in the field are adequately dealt with.

JACK HUMPHREY.

**THE PICTURE GALLERY OF CANADIAN HISTORY.** Illustrations drawn and collected by C. W. Jefferys, R.C.A., LL.D., assisted by T. W. McLean. Vol. 2. 1763-1830. 271 pp. Toronto: The Ryerson Press. \$2.00.

Of all Mr. Jefferys' contributions to the recording of Canada's past in pictures this work which is to be completed in three volumes is the most valuable. For years this reviewer has been hoping that someone would

produce a book on Canada comparable to the Quennells "History of Everyday Things in England," and while "The Picture Gallery of Canadian History" is not similar in every respect, it does much to satisfy this need.

In his introduction to this second volume, which deals with the period from 1763 to about 1830, Mr. Jefferys refers to the problem of choosing the most suitable material from the large supply available. His solution, in part, has been to give about as much space to military history as he gives to exploration, transportation, tools and implements, and pastimes combined. Surely this is misplaced emphasis even in a period during which Canada faced her two most formidable invasions since the British Conquest. There are no pictures at all of such vital matters as the care of the sick and the education of children. Although the table of contents serves as a general guide to the hundreds of pictures contained in the book, it does not take the place of an index—an absolute necessity in a book of this sort. There is, however, an extensive bibliography.

It is disappointing that the pictures seldom attain the level of works of art. In certain instances—

notably "Potash Boiling" and "The First Raft on the Ottawa, 1806" the artist does seem to catch something of the spirit of the times and the character of the country and the people, but on the whole his work is simply an accurate record. This lack of artistic distinction pervades the whole book. The design on the cover cannot be made out and the lettering is poorly done. The title page is better only in that it is clearer. There are no decorative end papers, tail pieces, etc.; things that can be used to great advantage in a book of this type. The opportunities for the tasteful arrangement of pictorial material have been lost. The page appearance gives none of the pleasure one feels on seeing a page of Thoreau MacDonald's "Some Tools of the Pioneers." Indeed some pages, such as 226, are so cluttered or cut up as to be ugly.

The important fact remains, however, that this book does provide a pictorial record of the period, historically accurate and extensive in range. It should prove a useful aid to all students of Canadian History, especially to those who agree with Trevelyan's claim that "Without social history, economic history is barren, and political history unintelligible." J.F.

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**MASKS.** By W. T. Benda. 20 pp. 77 plates.  
New York: Watson-Guption. \$5.00.

Mask-making is one of the oldest forms of art in the world—one of the most primitive and at the same time one of the most intellectual. So mentally conditioned are we to believing that the outward appearance of an animate object is the surest clue to its mind and character, that a person donning a new face in the form of a mask not only seems involuntarily to adapt his own movements and mannerisms to the mask's appearance, but he also arouses a completely different reaction in the spectator. Thus, among primitive tribes, the mask was believed to be actually endowed with magic properties, to possess power over men, spirits, and beasts, and it was enveloped in an aura of mystery and of awe. Standard types were developed over a period of generations, each type having a definite religious meaning and significance. However, the mask-maker today in our Western civilization is not bound by these traditional types, but has the freedom of creating his own individual styles and characters.

One of the foremost revivers of this almost lost art is W. T. Benda, whose masks have become world famous. Mr. Benda's masks are designed for the pantomime, the dance, and various forms of decoration and display. They are not for the spoken drama. With rare exceptions they are neither portraits nor caricatures; they are rather intensified and stylized representations of actual human types—dealing particularly with the fantastic, the comic, and the grotesque.

It would be a dull-minded person indeed who did not find this book interesting. There are 77 photographs of Benda's masks, including one in colour. There are also reproductions of the numerous sketches and studies which Benda makes before arriving at his final versions. He has written with great interest on the history of masks, their relationships to the varieties of civilizations in which they are to be found, and their place in our present day world. He generously shares what he has learned from a lifetime of experience about the most effective materials, tools, and methods used in mask-making; his accounts of various personal incidents in his career are both instructive and humorous.

Combining elements of the drama, painting, and sculpture, one feels that mask-making is indeed a great art too little recognized and too little practised. In the hands of a man like Benda it reaches a high state of perfection. The material in this book is well balanced and effectively presented and should prove to be a very worthwhile addition to anyone's library.

MARGARET TUCKER.

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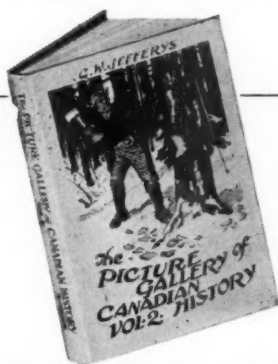
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*fleché*. Through the years we have continued to use these, adapting them to modern life. Our best dressed school children still wear the Red River coat with the coloured sash of the *coureurs de bois* and, although I was reared in a most civilized home, I wore no other shoe than the Indian moccasin until I went away to boarding-school at the age of seven. A jolly old squaw used to come to our house and squat on the floor while she fitted my feet and sewed the soft leather. (I don't think she chewed it—but I may have!)

#### *Glass Blowing*

This ancient art of glass blowing is practised in Canada, both as an art craft and as an industry. Our most picturesque and prolific blowers are O. H. Johns of Toronto, and his sons and daughters. By day they maintain a glass-blowing factory. Nights, Sundays, and holidays their relaxation is their art—glass blowing in their home studio. For two generations they have turned out all manner of glassware, ranging all the way from animals, stemware, bottles, and bowls to hospital, laboratory and factory equipment, fireproof cooking-ware and neon-tubing. Paul Heinkle and his wife, Elsa Heinkle, are noted for glass figures and for the delicate miniature ornaments which enchant children at party tables and at Christmas-time.

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We have a number of fine cabinet-makers. Many have been absorbed into factories where they work anonymously, some into smaller shops and some work independently, being either their own designers or working to designs drawn by others. But whether they work in factories or alone their skill is shown in works of architecture, in furniture, and in instrument building. Other specialized crafts of many kinds are combined with woodworking in the building of instruments. The Casavant organ, famous the world over, is a product of St. Hyacinthe,

Quebec. Craftsmen working for the Whaley-Royce Company, in Toronto, make all manner of other instruments—brasses, drums, stringed instruments, and have developed strings of a high order.

Perhaps the handicrafts have passed their peak of creative quality. Marius Barbeau, our greatest writer on the crafts, says they have and that it is "in the pictorial and graphic arts of the present day and also occasionally in professional sculpture, music and literature that we now find it". But one must hesitate to take this verdict as final. A Cellini might be born anywhere, any day.

Sometimes we wish Americans knew us better through our arts and crafts . . . I do not claim that all Canadian art today is great. We believe that some of it is great. Dostoevski once said that a single author could make a great national literature. So it is with every art. Beginning as a nation of artisans, we have used our hands through the years. Here and there have emerged those who were, or are, head and shoulders above the others: Jean-Baptiste Coté and Louis Jobin as wood-carvers; Haesem-hliyawn, sculptor of some of the finest totem poles in existence; Ranvoyzé and Arniot, the silversmiths; Tom Thomson and Emily Carr, the painters; Ned Pratt, the narrative poet; Morley Callaghan, the short story writer. The works of these and others are the landmarks of our culture. . . . Today we receive from the United States a great deal more than we give. We know your artists and your craftsmen by their names and by their work; we read your books; we hear your music. In more ways than one we have been grateful for your good neighbour policy, a policy which was not invented by your President, but is one we have long felt in your warmth and generosity. But the highest phase of neighbourliness is fraternity. In fraternity there is a two-way traffic of ideas. And so we hope for ever-widening channels for cultural relations between our two countries.



# THE ART FORUM

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Official War Artists (Army)*

Dear Sir:

With reference to the list of official War Artists (Army) contained in Canadian War Art Vol. II, No. 4, April-May, 1945, it is desired to point out that Lieut. Jack L. Shadbolt and Lieut. Molly Lamb are not official War Artists. Lieut. Shadbolt is employed in an administrative capacity and Lieut. Molly Lamb is a CWAC Officer who is being temporarily employed for eight weeks to depict CWAC activities, after which she will return to CWAC duties unless a vacancy for a War Artist should occur during that time.

As the establishment of official War Artists (Army) is definitely limited to ten, the list in *Canadian Art* is misleading and it is requested that a correction be made in the next number published.

Yours faithfully,

H. DESROSIERS,

*Deputy Minister, Department  
of National Defence, Army.*

*The editors made every effort to secure accurate information regarding the list of official war artists and regret the errors pointed out in the above letter. The following corrections are also necessary:—LAC M. Reinblatt should read F/O M. Reinblatt; F/O Charles Goldammer should be added to the R.C.A.F. list.*

Sir:

The following is in response to your invitation to comment on War Memorials.

After serving through the first Great War I also served nearly four years in France and Belgium with the Imperial War Graves Commission, supervising cemetery construction. What with over three thousand British military cemeteries, and an almost equal number of French military cemeteries, and thousands of allied War Monuments literally plastering the countryside, I am quite convinced that the very first requisite for a fitting War Memorial must be one of utility.

The sad spectacle of these mute, haunting, ghostly monuments have a depressing effect upon those who must live in the areas where they abound. Thousands upon thousands of large stone crosses embellished with a bronze sword, and inscribed with the words, "Their Name Liveth for Ever More" cannot bring the dead back to life, nor help garner or share in the fruits of their supreme sacrifice.

They died that we might live, and in so doing bestowed upon us the duty of serving

the living in the warmth of mutual help one to another.

One of the finest and most serviceable of all war memorials would be the dedication of service to our fellow man through the medium of worthwhile Community Centres.

Now that the Second World War has added its poignant harvest, the need for such a living centre in every community is even greater.

Yours sincerely,

WM. E. G. CRISFORD,  
2845 The Rise,  
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Sir:

There are in the services abroad and at home in Canada many Canadians who have an inherent or latent talent in the arts. From time to time many have voiced the desire to earn their living by contributing whatever ability they have. They are in many cases the first to admit they need training and guidance, but if they could achieve this they would like to look to the opportunity of livelihood by that expression. It seems to me that there is a tremendous opportunity here for rehabilitation. Not only this, which must be uppermost in the minds of all thinking Canadians, but a chance too, to contribute to the national and international cultures.

What are the proposed civic centres to be? Is this new activity to be governed by any already existing group? Is the idea to set up some board of advisors which would have, because of Dominion assistance, some definite control as to policy, or is the control to be political? Who is to decide what is a good civic centre policy, and what is good for it? Where will people study and develop their abilities to take charge of the individual centres? Is there in the final analysis going to be any activity at all?

Canada has her men and women coming home from the war. She has many at home already who have been doing various and sundry jobs for the prosecution of the war. Is she going to take the opportunity that there presents itself or is she going to allow these young people to filter back to various jobs and disregard any desire they may have to express themselves artistically?

Economically, great strides can take place here in Canada. The nation will demand houses that have not only refrigerators, but space for books and records, not only television sets but pianos. We shall require that our increasing interest in music and drama shall be borne in mind by our civic authorities, that concert halls and theatres be included in the reconstruction plans. Canada has a chance now as perhaps never before in her history. A chance to develop her artists and at the same time allow them their birthright.



It is not only time for certain social and economic reforms, but also for an artist's beginning. Are the Canadian people going to shoulder this responsibility or are they going to lean on the United States again? She has allowed her artists to disappear over the border in the past. Can we keep them here now? Do we want them? God knows, they want us.

GREGORY CRAWLEY,  
Lieut. R.C.N.V.R.

Dear Sir:

In your March issue, an article appeared on Modern Architecture in Canada. It gives a few examples in the form of photographs and comments. But what are these comments based on? One photograph shows the living room of Mr. B. C. Binning's house in Vancouver, B.C., and the accompanying remarks prove that the author, Hazen Sise, has not only never seen the house in question, but also been supplied with the worst possible cut-material and information.

The photograph does not give any idea of the way this room has been planned, it does not convey the importance of its design and how it "works." The comment reminds me of the critic who did not think much of a play which he himself had never seen.

I also don't see why one of the best examples of contemporary architecture on this coast should be brushed aside as amateurish, for the only reason that it has not been designed by a professional architect but—just by an artist.

J. KORNER,  
New Westminster, B.C.

*Editor's note: Other photographs of Mr. Binning's house were available in Ottawa and were studied. It was for the very reason that the house was considered by the editors as "one of the best examples of contemporary architecture" in western Canada, that mention of it was included in the article.*

Dear Sir:

In your last April-May issue about the "Grand Prix de Peinture", there is an 'Editor's note' at the bottom of the article which seems to me strange and unjustified. Has this editor seen the paintings themselves? If so, why not a serious criticism instead of this nasty comment?

The jury's verdict was clear. There was not, in the contest, an outstanding painting which deserved the high price of \$2,500.00. What is wrong about that? This happens frequently in a contest. First, because it is a contest with a definite subject and a definite size. This size, twenty square feet, was more suitable for a mural or a decorative panel than for an easel painting. Many of our artists were scared of the size. They were scared also of the jury.

Will it be too modern or too academic? They were scared of the organization of the contest, and maybe they were scared for their reputation. Don't forget, it was a first contest.

Forty-eight artists were brave enough to take the chance. And amongst them, I can assure you that there were some of our best artists with a well known reputation. Many of them studied for a long time abroad and got some scholarship. *But they didn't win.*

The winners were five almost unknown. Two of them, Miss Gadbois and Mr. Boudreau are very young, twenty-two or twenty-three, but I imagine they had something to say even if the way to say it was not entirely mastered.

I notice that some of your reproductions in the same issue are insignificant, and not works of art at all. There is no comment about them.

So, I protest about your note which is very mean, does not help anybody and make us feel almost *ashamed* to have won a prize of \$1,000.

I would ask you to publish this letter as "une mise au point." Anyway, I hope you will take it into consideration and understand the "point de vue."

Yours truly,

IRENE LEGENDRE,  
91 Murray Avenue,  
Quebec, P.Q.

Dear Sirs:

R.A.'s article "Choose Your Own Jury" in the April-May issue of *Canadian Art* prompts this letter.

The 'sine qua non' of art is untrammelled self-expression. Where an artist finds that to have his pictures hung he must paint according to any particular school—that is coercion. In an atmosphere of coercion self-expression dies—or starts a new school. And—once in the saddle, in the true art tradition, they will exhibit the same intolerance of all others they themselves have endured.

A juror without definite ideas is useless, but it is psychologically impossible for a dyed-in-the-wool Conservative or an out-and-out Radical to judge justly between Conservative and Modernist paintings.

The "Three Juries System" as used in Oakland California Art Gallery is, I believe, the solution. It ensures a high standard with satisfaction to all.

Briefly:—Three juries, of three jurors each, are chosen by lot from three panels of jurors as different as possible from each other. They are named Conservative, Intermediate and Radical. As the Intermediate overlaps the other two, the whole field of art is covered. A painting accepted by any one jury must be hung. The other two juries can do nothing to prevent it.

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## CONTRIBUTORS

**Fred S. Haines, R.C.A.**, is principal of the Ontario College of Art. He was formerly Vice President of the Royal Canadian Academy and for some years curator of the Art Gallery of Toronto. He has taken an active part in art education in Ontario.

**Dorothy Macpherson** was for three years Honorary Secretary of the Quebec Division of the Federation of Canadian Artists; she now does research for the National Film Board of Canada. Before coming to Canada she was for five years secretary of the London Group, of which Sickert, John Piper, Graham Sutherland, Matthew Smith and other foremost British non-academic painters and sculptors were members. She has also organized many exhibitions including in 1938 the 50th Anniversary Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society at the Royal Academy, London; and in 1939 compiled "A Directory of British Stained Glass".

**Gordon Webber** studied at the Ontario College of Art and the School of Design, Chicago, under Moholy-Nagy. He has taught at the Art Gallery of Toronto and at Pickering College, Newmarket. His work for the theatre has included designs for some of the productions of Hart House, University of Toronto, for the Children's Theatre University Settlement, Toronto and for the Modern Dance Festivals in California. He is at present lecturer at the McGill University School of Architecture and instructor in design at the Art Association of Montreal.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Each juror works independently. Conversation between jurors is discouraged so that a strong personality may not dominate the group. Each juror judges each and every picture and records his acceptance or rejection on a detachable tag attached to the back of each picture.

A juror is expected to reject all pictures not in his own class, but where he considers a picture in another class of outstanding merit, he may accept it. This record is valuable for future reference in placing jurors in their proper panels.

I am sure Mr. Wm. H. Clapp, Director, Oakland Art Gallery would gladly give full information to any gallery on request.

DANIEL McLELLAN, M.D.,  
Vancouver, B.C.

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